

A NEW FISH, OF THE GENUS *PRIONOBUTIS*, FROM NORTHERN AUSTRALIA.

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Family ELEOTRIDAE.

Genus **PRIONOBUTIS** Bleeker, 1874.

Prionobutis Bleeker, Arch. Neerl. Sci. Nat. ix, 1874, pp. 295 & 305. Orthotype, *Eleotris dasyrhynchus* Gunther, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (4) i, April 1, 1868, p. 265, pl. xii, fig. B, from Sarawak. *Id.* Bleeker, Arch. Neerl. Sci. Nat. x, 1875, p. 103 and Versl. Akad. Amsterd. (2) xi, 1877, p. 73 (*fide* Weber & de Beaufort, 1911). *Id.* Herre, Gobies Philip. & China Sea, 1927, p. 52. *Id.* Koumans, Zool. Mededeelingen xx, 1937, p. 21. *Id.* Fowler, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philad. lxxxix, 1937, p. 248.

A genus of small gudgeons found in marine, brackish, and fresh water in the Indo-Australian and southern Asiatic regions, whence a few species have been described. A characteristic feature is the presence of rows of spines on the top of the head. Two subgenera may be distinguished:

- A. Eye small, about 8 in head. Mouth reaching backward to behind level of eyes . . . *Prionobutis*
(type, *dasyrhynchus*).
- AA. Eye large, less than 4 in head. Mouth reaching to below anterior half of eye . . . *Themistocles*, subg. nov.
(type, *wardi*, nov.).

PRIONOBUTIS (THEMISTOCLES) WARDI, subg. et sp. nov.

(Figure 1.)

D. vi/i, 8; A. 8; P. 17; V. 5; C. 12 et lat. brev. Sc. 26 to hypural. Tr. 9, below first dorsal, to 5 on caudal peduncle. About 9 predorsal scales.

Head (13 mm.) 3.15, depth of body (11) 3.7, length of pectoral (12.5) nearly 3.3, depth of caudal peduncle (5) 8.2 in standard length (41 mm.). Eye (4 mm.) 3.25, interorbital (3) and snout (3) 4.3 in head.

Head blunt, longer than broad or deep. Lower jaw slightly longer than upper; mouth extending to below anterior half of the large eye. Fine teeth in jaws, outer ones slightly enlarged, but no canines. Tongue rounded. Eyes dorso-lateral, armed above and behind by a row of about two dozen small spines. Some similar spines above the nostrils and on each side of the premaxillary processes which reach back almost to level of eyes. A few more spines scattered on nape and along the sides of the distinct nuchal groove. Preoperculum entire, unarmed, its limb with a few open pores. Operculum entire, ending in a flap with a blunt spine. Cheeks and opercles scaly. Top of head scaly from a little behind the eyes. Interorbital flat and sunken. A

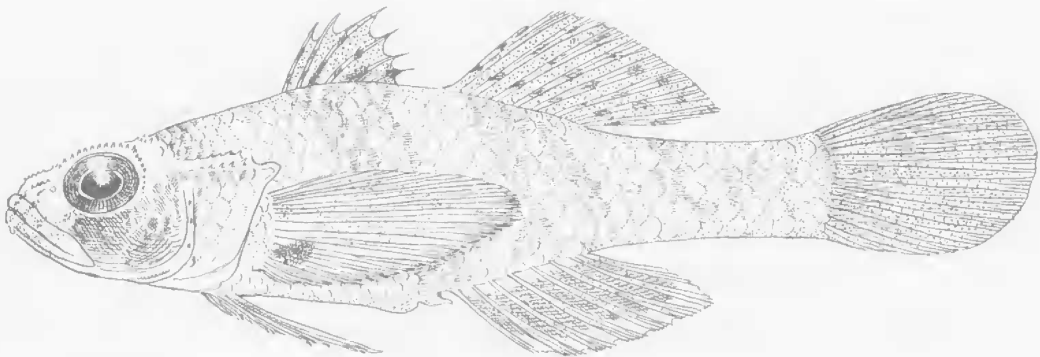


Fig. 1.—*Prionobutis (Themistocles) wardi*. (G. P. Whitley.)

row of fleshy papillae along each side of lower surface of head. No cuticular papillae elsewhere (but a paratype has some short rows of minute papillae on cheeks). A small mental flap at the symphysis of the lower jaw. Gill-membranes united across the tapering isthmus. Body compressed, deep below the first dorsal fin and tapering to a long caudal peduncle, covered with large thin ctenoid scales which do not extend on to fins. No auxiliary scales. Vent large. A large genital papilla.

First dorsal fin with six weak spines. Second dorsal short-based but with long rays. Anal fin similar to second dorsal. Pectorals long, extensive, ninth ray longest, reaching anal fin; lower rays fringe-like. Ventral fins well separated, inserted well forward; rays weak, fringed. Caudal rounded, upper half the longer.

Colour in alcohol, rich brown; ground-colour of fins somewhat yellower. Head and body crossed by several diffuse bands of darker-edged scales. The first dark area crosses the cheek, two bands extend from first dorsal to near

the belly, another band below soft dorsal breaks into two on lower half of fish over the anal fin, two or three more dark transverse areas across caudal peduncle. Eye bluish. Top of head yellow. Fins speckled and mottled with dark brownish. Caudal largely dusky (often light or only partly infuscated in paratypes).

Described and figured from the holotype, a specimen 41 mm. in standard length or two inches overall, the largest of a series of ten specimens.

Localities.—Off Point Charles, near Darwin, Northern Territory of Australia; caught in tangled rope in 12 fathoms, June 1938. Holotype (Austr. Mus. regd. no. IA. 7849).

Same locality, July 4, 1938. Paratype, IA. 7850.

Darwin Harbour, near the jetty, 8 to 10 faths., July 30, 1938: six paratypes (IA. 7852-3), and one (IA. 7610) in burrows on mud-flat, Darwin, July 31.

Off the south coast of Melville Island, Northern Territory, 8 to 13 faths. July 1938: one paratype (IA. 7854). Specimens caught in rope tangles from H.M.A.S. "Moresby" by Mr. Melbourne Ward, naturalist to the naval surveying expedition, after whom I gratefully name the species.

Range.—Northern Australia; Dampierian marine region, shallow water.

This new species differs from the genotype in having much larger orbits, and maxilla reaching to below, not behind, the eyes. From the other species (*koilomatodon* Bleeker, 1849; *caperatus* Cantor, 1850, *serrifrons* Rutter, 1897) it is distinguished by the form of the head and in having papillae on chin. *Pogonoleotris microps* Weber, 1908 is nearer the small-eyed *Prionobutis dasyrhynchus* (Gunther, 1868) but has auxiliary scales on the body.

END OF VOL. XI, MEMOIRS OF THE QUEENSLAND MUSEUM.
